



Policy Attachment to: 16.31- Permanency Planning For Children/Youth in DCS Custody

Subject:	Planned Permanent Living Arrangement Protocol
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Additional Information:

The goal of “**Planned Permanent Living Arrangement**” (PPLA) is directly related to a specific resource family that is willing to make a long-term commitment to a child in custody for whom Reunification, Adoption, Permanent Guardianship, and Exit Custody to Relative or Kin are not viable permanency options. While it is a “permanency” goal, it is only relevant when associated with a caregiver willing to make a commitment to the child up to the age of majority, at a minimum, and preferably, into adulthood.

This would include, for example, a commitment to being the family with whom the adult child can spend Thanksgiving and Christmas, to whom the adult child can come “home” during school vacations, and with whom life’s major milestones, such as graduation, marriage, or the birth of a child, are celebrated.

Nevertheless, if all other conditions for PPLA have been met and the resource parent will provide care until the age of 18 but is unable to make any promises beyond that age, PPLA can be an appropriate goal. The Child and Family Team must be convinced that this resource home is the best place for the child to live until the age of majority and the child must express a desire to remain in that home.

Research has clearly demonstrated that youth who age out of foster care without a long-term commitment from a caring adult have many more difficulties making the transition to adulthood. For this reason, the use of PPLA as a permanency goal is only to be used as a last resort and when a specific resource family has made a clear commitment to care for that child, at least until the age of 18 and hopefully, beyond.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The conditions under which PPLA can be identified as a sole or concurrent permanency goal for youth in Tennessee are:

- **The Department has made reasonable and appropriate efforts to return the child to the child’s parents, to place the child with appropriate family members or to place the child for adoption and has been unable to do so;**
- **the person to whom the Department proposes to assign permanent caretaker status has demonstrated a commitment to assuming long-term responsibility for the child;**
- **the person to whom the Department proposes to assign permanent caretaker status has been fully informed about the options of adoption and, if applicable, permanent guardianship, and expresses a reasoned judgment for not pursuing adoption or permanent guardianship;**
- **it is in the best interest of the child to remain in the home of the proposed permanent caretaker rather than to be considered for adoption by another person;**

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- the Child and Family Team has carefully considered all of the permanency options for this child and recommended PPLA as a sole or concurrent goal; and,
- the approval for a goal of PPLA has been requested and granted from the Commissioner or her Designee in Central Office.

AGE LIMITATIONS

PPLA should not be considered a permissible goal for any child under the age of **16** unless the proposed permanent placement meets all of the requirements set forth above, and at least one of the following:

- The permanent placement is in a kinship resource home;
- There are extraordinary individual circumstances that warrant an exception to the strong presumption against approving PPLA for younger children.

CONSENT OF CHILD/YOUTH

Any child who is twelve years of age or older, after having been fully informed about the options of adoption and permanent guardianship, must consent to the use of PPLA as a sole or concurrent goal.

PERMANENCY PLANNING

It's critically important that we continue to work with children/youth that have an approved goal of PPLA. Permanency plans with a goal of PPLA must include action steps designed to help the child or youth develop additional meaningful relationships and family-like connections with other adults. These are resources that may remain actively involved and supportive of the child or youth into and throughout adulthood. Strategies should include efforts to involve the child or youth into extra-curricular activities through which such relationships can naturally evolve. There also should be efforts to help that youth reconnect with significant adults from his or her past who may become valuable resources for the future.

Part of the approval process of the goal of PPLA by the Commissioner or her designee will include a review of current and previous permanency plans to ensure that the conditions for PPLA have been met – for example, there have been clearly documented efforts to achieve other goals prior to this request; subsequent plans have been logically updated and represent a progression of efforts; and, the current plan reflects ongoing efforts to help the child or youth broaden their network of supportive adult relationships.

PERIODIC REVIEWS OF PPLA

A) Every 6 months by the CFTM

The Child and Family Team must specifically review the continued appropriateness of the PPLA goal for any child or youth at least once every six months. This is to ensure that the placement continues to meet the child/youth's needs, that efforts to develop other relationships are ongoing, and that the goal is still the best option for that child or youth. This review should be documented on the Child and Family Team Meeting Summary Form and reflected in the case notes.

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B) Annually by the Commissioner or her Designee

The determination of the Child and Family Team that PPLA continues to be an appropriate goal must also be reviewed annually by the Commissioner and/or her designee. The goal can only be continued if the Commissioner or her designee concurs that the standards are still being met and that PPLA remains appropriate. This will require submitting another request to continue the goal and obtaining approval from the Commissioner's Designee. This request must be accompanied by the Child and Family Team Summary Form documenting its involvement and the team's recommendation to continue the goal of PPLA.

IN THE EVENT OF PLACEMENT DISRUPTION

Because PPLA is directly related to a specific caregiver who has made a commitment to the child or youth, whenever there has been a disruption from that home, and the child or youth is no longer living with that caregiver, the goal cannot continue to be PPLA unless:

- The Child and Family Team reviews the goal and makes a new determination, based on the new circumstances, that PPLA continues to be an appropriate goal;
- All of the standards for PPLA have been met, i.e., there is a resource family willing to make a comparable long-term commitment to that child or youth; and,
- The FSW submits another request to obtain the approval of the Commissioner or her Designee, who will review and respond to that request. This request must also be accompanied by the Child and Family Team Summary Form documenting its involvement and the team's recommendation to continue the goal of PPLA with the new resource parent(s).

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING APPROVAL OF PPLA

The Child and Family Team must play a pivotal role in the recommendation of a goal of PPLA. Prior to requesting approval from the Commissioner's designee, the Child and Family Team must:

1. Meet to discuss the goal of PPLA
2. review the standards and requirements for approval of PPLA
3. assess the commitment from the caretaker(s)
4. explore the desires of the child or youth, and,
5. make a recommendation for the goal.

This discussion should be documented on the Child and Family Team Meeting Summary Form (CS-0747) and submitted with the Request for Permanency Goal of PPLA (CS-0681.)

The steps for requesting approval are:

- Complete the Request for Permanency Goal of PPLA. You must complete this form whether you are requesting a sole or concurrent goal of PPLA.
- If approval for PPLA as a concurrent goal was previously approved, you must submit another request in order to make PPLA the sole goal.
- The form should be completed by the family service worker and then reviewed and approved by the Team Leader, Team Coordinator, and RA (or designee) before being submitted to Central Office. Signatures of those reviewing are required on the form.

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- Be sure to include the Child and Family Team Meeting Summary Form describing the team's involvement and recommendation of this goal.
- Include any other paperwork you consider to be relevant to the request, such as court orders, reports or evaluations of therapists, documentation of adoption counseling, letters from the resource parents or the child/youth, etc.
- The form and any supporting documents should be submitted to Central Office via standard mail or fax to the Assistant Director of Permanency Planning. As regional leadership signatures are required, no e-mail requests will be accepted.
- Your request, additional paperwork, and the TNKids documentation will be reviewed by a designee within the Office of Permanency Planning. You will be contacted via e-mail or telephone if there are additional questions.
- Please provide contact information for all Child and Family Team Members, as they may be contacted in the course of the review process.
- Following the CFTM to recommend PPLA and the submission of the request, staff should expect a written response within two weeks from receipt of the request. If Child and Family Team members need to be contacted, more time may be necessary. Upon receipt of the Commissioner's or her Designee's approval, the FSW should reconvene the CFTM to revise the Permanency Plan with the new concurrent or sole goal of PPLA.
- Requests for approval for permanency goals of PPLA should be sent to the **Assistant Director of Permanency Planning**. **Faxed requests can be sent to (615) 532-6495**. If you have any questions, please call 615 253-1349.